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Ministry of Health

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Runcorn Rural District Council.

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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health,

FOR THE

Year ending 31st December,
1943.



1944.

OSMOND C. KEMP, PRINTER,
FRODSHAM.



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PUBLIC HEALTH DEPT.,
CASTLE PARK,
FRODSHAM.

To the Chairman and Members of the
Runcorn Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

It is regretted that again the Annual Report has to be curtailed at the request of the Ministry of Health, but the latter have asked for certain additional information in this Report as it applies to Water Supplies, Immunisation against Diphtheria and Sewage.

Speaking generally, the health of the Community has been satisfactory, especially considering war conditions, the latter have not decreased the efforts of all concerned in Civil Defence duties, and, the essential work required in connection with Infectious Disease, Food, Milk, Water, Housing and Health propaganda.

It is noted with the greatest satisfaction that the Government propose to deal by further Acts of Parliament with the many aspects of Public Health, these will apply, for example, to Housing, Town and Country Planning, Milk Supplies, Water Supplies, Sewage Disposal, Education and further facilities for Medical treatment.

The various excellent Voluntary Societies will, as before, be most useful agencies whereby members of the Community will be aware of the contents of these various Acts of Parliament.

We must congratulate the National Council for Social Services with their many attached Societies, etc., for their excellent voluntary work, especially the Cheshire Rural Community Council; in addition the Council for encouragement of Music and Art, (C.E.M.A.) has, and in the future will have, an important bearing in bringing Music and Art to the people.

A sound mind in a sound body should be our endeavour.

VITAL STATISTICS—

Birth Rate : 15·7 per 1,000 against 14·2 for 1942.

Death Rate : 11·5 per 1,000 against 11·2 for 1942.

Infantile Mortality Rate : 46·5 per 1,000 against 29·6 for 1942.

Still Births : 25·3 per 1,000 against 19·3 for 1942.

The highest mortality figures given are due to the following causes : **Heart Disease and Cancer.**

There have been no outstanding causes of sickness or invalidity during the year.

The number of Scarlet Fever cases reported during the year total 80 ; Diphtheria cases 26, 12 of which after FINAL diagnosis in Hospital reduced this figure to 14 : 50% of these cases were severe mixed infections, *i.e.* Diphtheria with Streptococcal Tonsillitis—the latter infection would occur in overcrowded houses and/or where sewage disposal requires rectification.

The percentage of children immunised against Diphtheria from 1938 to year ending 1943 was as follows : 1 to 5 years, 90% 5 to 15 years 96% The percentage of “ booster ” doses given will be included in the 1944 Annual Report.

As the total child population cannot be quoted in my Annual Report it is not possible to give a table showing in detail the number of cases immunised and the number of cases of Diphtheria which occurred amongst these ; these figures will be included in the first Post-war Annual Report, but there is no doubt that Immunisation has been a wonderful safeguard in keeping these figures so low considering war conditions and the total child population ; however, there must be no complacency in this matter now or in the future.

IMMUNISATION AGAINST DIPHTHERIA.

Strenuous efforts have been made through the medium of the Press, Cinema Screens, Circular Letters, Birthday Cards, etc., to

Parents and Guardians stressing their great responsibilities in connection with the Immunisation against Diphtheria, and to point out to them that the ONLY REAL SAFEGUARD against the deadly disease "DIPHTHERIA" is to "ACT AT ONCE" and have their children immunised properly under the Council's Free Scheme, by visiting their own Doctor. Immunisation Clinics at Schools will be organised as and when required. All children (one to fifteen years of age, and as soon after one year as possible) should be immunised against Diphtheria by two doses of the special serum; in addition a "Booster Dose" (one dose of serum) is recommended in five year's time so as to decrease the possibility of contracting this deadly disease.

HOUSING.

Owing to war conditions housing conditions are, and will continue to cause some concern. My Council hope as soon as possible with Government aid and private enterprize to arrange for building to relieve overcrowding, those living in unfit houses and other houses required for any increase in the population or other purposes. A short and long term policy will be required, both fitting into a proper Planning Scheme.

A National Policy is required for the standard of housing of imported labour on farms. This should be dealt with as soon as possible. In the meantime the Sanitary Inspectors are taking such informal action as is possible in such cases.

WATER SUPPLY.

300 yards of 3" main were laid at Foxhill and 220 yards of 2" main at Kingsley during 1943. Frequent tests are taken during the year by the Sanitary Inspectors of main, well and spring supplies and these tests are carried out by the County Analyst. It is strongly recommended that farms, etc. having only a well or spring supply are connected to the main at an early date. In the meantime those concerned are advised to boil or chlorinate all bad or doubtful supplies. The question of

sufficiency of supply is being dealt with by your Surveyor and it is understood the Ministry of Health are aware of what action is being taken in this important matter. A separate Report is being forwarded to the Ministry of Health giving details of all properties not on a main water supply so that these can be connected to the main at an early date.

FOOD AND DRUG ADULTERATION ACT.

Samples taken under the Food and Drug Adulteration Act totalled 47, which included 27 samples of Milk, one of which was found to be not up to standard.

CANAL BOATS.

The Annual Report of the Canal Boat Inspector was good, and has already been forwarded to the Ministry.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

These have been carried out satisfactorily considering war conditions.

SCABIES.

The latest Scheme which was put into operation during July, 1943, in accordance with Ministry of Health Scabies Order is still in operation as under :

Patients from the parishes of Alvanley, Aston, Dutton, Frodsham, Halton, Helsby, Kingsley, Manley, Norley, Norton, Sutton, attend the Cleansing Centre, Balfour Road, Runcorn.

Patients from the parishes of Antrobus, Appleton, Great Budworth, Daresbury, Grappenhall, Hatton, Moore, Preston Brook, Stockton Heath, Stretton, Walton, Whitley attend the Cleansing Centre, Warrington Borough.

During the year the incidence of Scabies has not been of a severe character.

INFESTATION.

Infestations of Children with head lice, which can not only convey infections, but through irritation and sometimes septic conditions lower the standard of health of children affected, is being dealt with as efficiently as possible. The use of Lethane Oil (with hot Lysol solution and Derbac comb) is strongly recommended as this has been found to be efficacious in the eradication of head lice. Derbac Soap with the Derbac Comb has also been used.

HEALTH PROPAGANDA.

Immunisation, Skin Diseases, Dietetics and Cooking, also Venereal Disease have all received special attention; leaflets, etc., have been circulated to all Voluntary Societies, Youth Organisations, etc. The Central Council for Health Education have been of great assistance in this connection.

Householders are again advised that when possible the "Black-out" arrangements on their windows should be removed so as to allow of sufficient light and especially ventilation; these measures, in addition to frequent "Spring-cleaning" of rooms, will help in reducing the incidence of disease.

The co-operation and help of all concerned has been greatly appreciated by me in the carrying out of my various duties.

I beg to remain,

Your obedient Servant,

E. N. HILLMAN GRAY,

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH.

CASTLE PARK,
FRODSHAM,
CHESHIRE.

